

SNICKERTY-NICK AND THE GIANT



BY JULIA ELLSWORTH FORD.
RHYMES BY WITTER BYNNER.
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ARTHUR RACKHAM



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SNICKERTY NICK



DANCE OF SPRING

SNICKERTY NICK

BY

JULIA ELLSWORTH FORD

Rhymes by
Witter Bynner

Illustrations by
Arthur Rackham



New York
MOFFAT, YARD & CO.
1919

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THE
WIDOW
OF
WINDSOR

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FOR THE DELIGHTFUL CHILD SPIRIT
OF THE RHYMES OF
W I T T E R B Y N N E R
I AM DEEPLY GRATEFUL
AND THAT PART OF THE PLAY WHICH IS MINE
I DEDICATE TO HIM
WITH SINCERE APPRECIATION

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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DREN AND GROWN-UPS. With colored illus-
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M O F F A T, Y A R D & C O.

FOREWORD

The idea of the Selfish Giant in this play has been taken from the story of Oscar Wilde's *Selfish Giant*. Spring would not come to his garden because he would not let the children play in it. It was always winter there.

One morning he woke up hearing the music of a linnet singing in his garden. He jumped out of bed and saw a most wonderful sight, "flowers were looking up through the green grass and laughing," and in every tree was a little child; but one little boy was too tiny to climb the tree and the Giant's heart melted and he helped the little child into the tree. The little child kissed him and forever after the children played in the Giant's garden, because his heart had softened through love of the little child.

The children never saw the child again. But one day he came to the Giant, who saw on the palms of the child's hands "the prints of two nails and the prints of two nails were on the little feet."

FOREWORD

The little child had come to take the Giant to play in his garden, "which is Paradise."

My indebtedness to this story is the character of the Selfish Giant. The little play of *Snickerty Nick* is not a dramatization of *The Selfish Giant*. The character of Snickerty Nick is an original character and the play centers around him. The little boy is only a loving and beloved child, and Spring and Winter are personified by faeries and gnomes.

To Arthur Rackham I tender my most sincere thanks whose magic touch, as in *Peter Pan*, *Grimm's Faery Tales* and *Undine*, making real all faeries and gnomes, endears all child life to grown-ups as well as to children.

JULIA ELLSWORTH FORD.

CHARACTERS

THE GIANT..... BARON BILL-ARRON
BOMBERRUM

THE DWARF..... SNICKERTY NICK

THE LITTLE BOY

THE CHILDREN

WINTER

SPRING

WINTER'S GNOMES—SNOW

HAIL

FROST

NORTHWIND

CHILBLAINS

SPRING'S FAERIES—COWSLIP

BUTTERCUP

SWEET WILLIAM

DANDELION

BLUE BELL

BUMBLE BEE

RAGGED SAILOR

*The children may choose their names from
Mother Goose or any they may fancy.*

*A little boy came laughing and turned icicles
into flowers and won a kingdom with love.*

SCENE I

SNICKERTY NICK

SCENE I.—*A flower garden covered with frost and snow. Here and there bushes covered with snow—large enough to hide children. On the right a tower with window and door. In the middle back a wall with a barred gate, through which flowers are seen blooming outside. On the step of the tower is seen the Dwarf. He has a kind quaint face. He is painting an enormous sign.*

TRESPASSERS
WILL BE
ET

DWARF

A Giant owns this garden
Where the children want to play,

SNICKERTY NICK

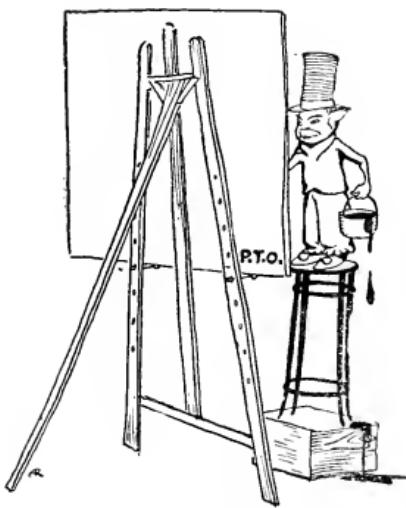
But the Giant hates the children
And chases them away;
And there can't be any summer here,
The sun will never stay,
For where no children ever come,
It's winter every day.

Now I'm the Giant's servant
And I never have my way:
For I have to tell the children
That they mustn't come and play.
For I wouldn't want them eaten up
And so I have to say,
It's not my grass, you can't come in,
You've got to go away.

[Placing the paint brush in the paint can]

Pretty good work, Nicky. One more touch
and it will be finished.

*[While Snickerty Nick is eyeing his work, a
small boy creeps through the hedge, tip-*



He has a quaint kind face

SNICKERTY NICK

toes up behind Nicky and takes his paint brush away. Nicky reaches for it, not finding it, looks puzzled, hunts for it and discovers the little boy.]

LITTLE BOY

[*Holding up the paint brush, laughing*]

Hello, Nicky! What will you give me for this?

DWARF

A spanking.

LITTLE BOY

O no, you couldn't!

DWARF

Couldn't I? Why couldn't I, I'd like to know?

LITTLE BOY

[*Smiling and giving the Dwarf the brush*]

You don't look like a spanker, Nicky.

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

You're right. I'm more spanked against than spanking. The Giant takes care of that. See what he made me do for him.

[*Pointing to the sign.*]

LITTLE BOY

What does it say, Nicky?

DWARF

Trespassers will be et.

LITTLE BOY

What's trespassers?

DWARF

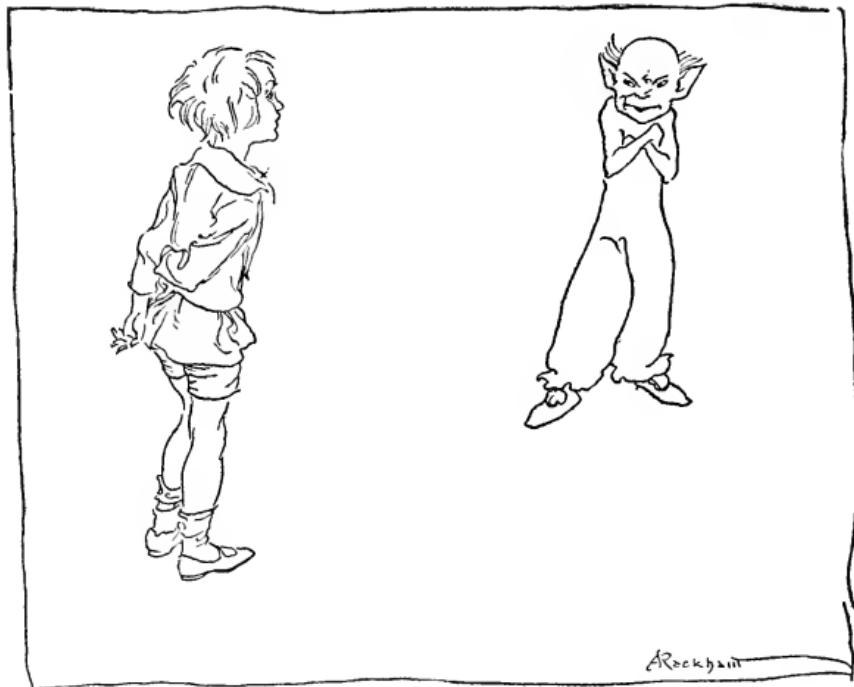
You're one.

And you'd better look spry!—

If the Giant comes by

And you're here yet—

Why, *you'll* be et.



More spanked against than spanking

SNICKERTY NICK

It's a bit cannibalistic, I must say. But that isn't my doings, you know.

LITTLE BOY

I'm not afraid of him.

[He goes toward the Giant's door and is about to knock.]

DWARF

[Alarmed]

Don't knock on that door!

LITTLE BOY

I want to ask the Giant why we can't play in his garden. The gardens that we can't get into are the ones we like the best, and we like this garden better than any other garden.

DWARF

When the Giant goes away I'll let you in. I'm afraid you'll be et up if you stay here.

SNICKERTY NICK

LITTLE BOY

I'm not afraid.

DWARF

Don't you see that sign? Out with you!

[Dwarf chases the Boy out of the garden. He stumbles over his easle and the sign falls down with a loud noise. As Snickerty Nick opens the gate the Giant sticks his head out of the door. The Giant is a little deaf and often holds his hand to his ear.]

GIANT

Hello, Snickerty Nick! What's all this racket?

[He catches sight of the sign, comes out, grabs the brush from the Dwarf's hand and adds another T and roars,]

E-T-T—E double T—ETT. Don't you know how to spell ETT?



The Giant sticks his head out of the door

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

I do.

GIANT

You don't.

DWARF

[Making a bow]

I beg to differ with you, Baron Bill-Arron Bomberrum. I have been the amanuensis of the Marquise of Magog for ninety-nine years.

GIANT

What's an amanuensis?

DWARF

An amanuensis is a man who follows you around and writes down everything you say.

GIANT

What's that to do with ett?

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

What has that to do with ett?
The most exquisite woman I ever met,
Etta by name, a love, a pet,
Here's what she had to do with ett—
She et her egg with etiquette.
But once her lovely sleeve got wet
And it dripped when she danced the minuet
And left a spot on the green carpet.
And I made a note of her great regret
In this little green book which I carry yet.

GIANT

Stop your nonsense, talk sense.

DWARF

Who talks sense anyway?
[Counting his buttons]
Richman? Poorman? Beggarman? Thief?
Doctor? Lawyer? Merchant? Chief? None
of them talk sense.

SNICKERTY NICK

GIANT

You irritate me. I'm going to kick you.

DWARF

[*Consulting the green book*]

You've already kicked me 9,995 times. When you've kicked me 10,000 times, according to your solemn promise as a giant, the kingdom will be mine. Don't say I didn't warn you. Five more!

GIANT

By Beelzebub, I must kick you.

[*He kicks the Dwarf.*]

DWARF

[*Taking his score book out of his pocket*]

Got it in my score book—got it in—9,996 kicks.

[*Dusts his pants, where the Giant has kicked*

SNICKERTY NICK

him, with a whisk broom hanging on his coat.]

GIANT

Here's another.

[Giant kicks Dwarf again.]

DWARF

9,997 kicks! Only three more!

[The Dwarf chuckling, again takes the whisk broom and dusts his pants.]

GIANT

Hang the sign on the gate, you snickerty snicker! What were you made for?

DWARF

Being, not doing, your Highness.

GIANT

Well, I was made for doing. I am faring away early to-morrow morning before you'll be up.

SNICKERTY NICK

sleepy head, to see the great Cornish Ogre to ask him why it's always winter in my garden. It's spring now and I want flowers in my garden and I don't understand why they won't grow. They bloom everywhere except here. I am the great giant, Baron Bill-Arron Bomberrum. And I will have flowers. Look around and see if you can find me even one bud.

[They both look.]

DWARF

I can't find one. I like my friend Mary's garden better than yours, although I don't care for cockle shells and silver bells. Personally, I prefer the pretty maids all in a row.

GIANT

Listen! I shall be gone seven years. Seven is a lucky number. I shall stay only seven years because my conversation is limited.

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

[*Scratching his forehead*]

It's the limit!

GIANT

[*With his hand to his ear*]

What?

DWARF

I say seven years is the limit.

[*The clock in the tower strikes one.*]

GIANT

What's that?

DWARF

Oh, that's Dickery Dock. He is a perfect nuisance. I wish he would let that old clock alone. Personally I dislike him.

[*Just as the Giant starts to go out of the gate, the Dwarf puts his hat on the ground in front of the Giant.*]



THE LITTLE BOY

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

Kick it quick!

[*To the audience, behind his hand*]

There's a brick in it!

[*The Giant starts to kick the Dwarf again.*]

DWARF

[*Standing still*]

Go on, kick me—999—

[*The Giant stops his foot in time, shakes his stick at him.*]

GIANT

Not this time!

DWARF

Nick of time, for all time belongs to Snickerty Nick. No time like the present.

[*Takes off his hat and bows, then runs swiftly around in a circle.*]

SNICKERTY NICK

GIANT

What are you doing?

DWARF

Killing time. I learned to do that when I was the amanuensis of the Marquise of Magog.

GIANT

Hang up the sign and lock the gate. Don't let anyone in. Don't let the children play in my garden. My own garden is my own garden and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself. Do you hear?

DWARF

Yes, your Stoutness, I hear. Hearing may be better than seeing—sometimes—it depends on what you look at. Personally I prefer seeing, even when—

SNICKERTY NICK

GIANT

Here, Snickerty Nick, pull off my boots. I am going to bed.

[*Dwarf pulls off one boot.*]

DWARF

[*Looking at it quizzically*]

It has always been a puzzle to me, how that old woman lived in the shoe with so many children. Very insanitary.

[*As he pulls off the other boot, the Giant kicks him. He rolls over, then gets up and makes the entry in his score book.*]

9,999! One more kick and the kingdom's mine. Hurrah!

GIANT

I am going to bed now. See that there is no noise around here.

[*Giant puts on his night-cap and goes in.*]

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

My brain may be little,
My brain may be thick,
But why should people
With kingdoms—kick?

My brain may be mighty,
My brain may be deep,
But dreams are a kingdom—
I'm going to sleep.

[He curls up on the steps and goes to sleep. The stage darkens. It is night.]

[Winter, wrapped in silver, steals in through the gate, treads softly around the flower beds, in and out among the bushes and stands in the middle.]

WINTER

[Calling softly]

Northwind! Northwind!



DANCE OF WINTER AND GNOMES

SNICKERTY NICK

[*Northwind dashes in clothed in purple, purple wings floating behind her.*]

WINTER

Blow your horn! Call our friends! This is a delightful spot. We must invite Snow, Hail, Frost, and Chilblains and live here all the year round.

NORTHWIND

Oo-oo-OO-ooh!

[*Snow enters all in white carrying a basket filled with snowballs, and with snow to sprinkle on the bushes. Hail, in grey, hops over one of the bushes and as he does so hailstones are heard. Frost, in silver, waves a silver scarf over the flowers. Chilblains, in blue, comically carries an enormous bottle of camphor.*]

WINTER

Let's dance.

SNICKERTY NICK

WINTER AND GNOMES

[As they dance]

We'll make you say, Ooh! and we'll make you
say, Ow!

But it's cold, cold, cold!

We've a wonderful game for those that know
how—

You don't, for you've never been told.

We plant little icicles neatly in rows,
So small you can't see them, then each of us goes
And picks one and tickles the end of your nose,
Another one prickles the tips of your toes
And you run saying, Ooh! and you run saying,
Ow!

But it's cold, cold, cold!

WINTER

Northwind, lock the selfish Giant in.

[Northwind locks the Giant's door.]

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

[*Waking up*]

Dear me! What has happened! I'm a bit chilly on the projecting points.

[*Dwarf rubs his ears and toes.*]

GIANT

[*Poking his head out of the window with his night-cap on and roaring*]

Get out of my garden. Unlock my door, you winter villains. You and your friends have killed all my flowers and the blossoms on my apple trees and there will be no golden fruit in the autumn. If I catch you I will kill you and gobble you all up.

ALL

[*Mocking him*]

Fee, fi, fo, fum!

Baron Bill-Arron Bomberrum!

SNICKERTY NICK

CHILBLAINS

Baron Bill-Arron Bomberum. It'll be nip
and tuck between us two. Try to tuck me away
and I'll nip your nose.

GIANT

I will turn you into frogs and snakes.

WINTER

[*Calling*]

Snow, Hail, Frost, Northwind, Chilblains,
come!

[*Snow throws snowballs at the Giant. Hail
throws stones and Northwind blows on his
horn.*]

GIANT

Go away or I will kill you and eat you up, and
a poor cold porridge you'll make.



Snow throws snowballs at the Giant

SNICKERTY NICK

ALL

[Mocking and clapping their hands with the rhyme]

Pease porridge hot,
Pease porridge cold,
Pease porridge in the pot,
The Giant's growing old!

CHILBLAINS

Give him the cold shoulder.

[Winter and gnomes turn left shoulder toward him.]

Ha! Ha! Look at your nose now!

DWARF

You are disturbing my rest with that beastly noise. Go away, I want to sleep.

GIANT

Get out of my garden. Go to the North Pole, there's where you belong. I wish you would go

SNICKERTY NICK

there and never come back again. I want flowers in my garden.

WINTER

This is nearer and more convenient. Besides we don't like the Esquimos, they are too fat.

DWARF

You ought to know my friend Jack Sprat. He eats no fat, but his wife——

[*Rolls his eyes.*]

Personally I dislike fat women.

GIANT

Snickerty Nick, unlock the door.

ALL

[*Restraining the Dwarf with nips*]

Ha, ha, Baron Bill-Arron Bomberrum. Come out if you can. Just walk out, your Highness.

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

Walking is such good exercise. Much better than taking a bath. Bathing is such lonely work, you know.

GIANT

Snickerty Nick, if you will unlock the door, I'll give you the last kick. Then the kingdom will be yours.

CHILBLAINS

[*Unlocking the door*]

I've unlocked the door. Come out, come out, kick me, and give me the kingdom.

GIANT

[*Tramping out furious and holding his stick high*]

This is what I'll give you!

[*They run. Giant chases them. They disappear behind the bushes. Chilblains steals up behind and touches the Dwarf.*]

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

[*Howls.*]

My! My! What has happened to my toes?
[*Sits on the ground and rubs them.*]

Something has happened to my feet, one more thing to add to my woes. If I can't walk and have to use crutches, and the Giant kicks me any more, I'll fall down and break my head, and lose my crown. Personally I prefer walking.

[*Chilblains touches the Giant's nose.*]

GIANT

[*His nose is quite white.*]

My! My! What has happened to my nose?
[*Giant steps back and stumbles over the Dwarf and starts to kick him but stops.*]

No, Nicky, I won't kick you any more for the present; I know just when to stop.

[*Teeth chattering*]

I have had enough of this old garden. I won't



The great Cornish Ogre

SNICKERTY NICK

stay here any longer. I am getting old and lonely. I am going away to see the Cornish Ogre, to see if he has flowers in his garden.

DWARF

Good-bye! Be good! Good for nothing!

GIANT

What?

DWARF

Nothing.

GIANT

Don't forget to hang up the sign.

[*Exit Giant.*]

[*Little Gnomes pop their heads above the bushes.*]

GNOMES

Snickerty Nick, what will you give us when you get the kingdom?

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

I'll give you a whistle and then you can
whistle for it.

NORTHWIND

I am your sister; what will you do for me?

DWARF

I'll call you Una and give you a dandelion to
roar at you.

FROST

I am your brother; what will you give me?

DWARF

I will give you the mint of my kingdom—a
peppermint.

SNOW

I am your sweetheart; what will you give me?

DWARF

A trip to the moon.

SNICKERTY NICK

SNOW

Ever been to the Moon, Nicky?

DWARF

I once thought of going to the moon but I was prevented by circumstances over which I had no control.

HAIL

I am your great-uncle; what will you give me?

DWARF

I'll give you a horse and then you'll have a hobby.

CHILBLAINS

I am your granny; what will you give me?

DWARF

A horn and then you'll have plenty.

I am very busy. Go away. I am going to sleep for seven years. Ah! Early to bed and

SNICKERTY NICK

early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise. Personally I prefer to sleep.

[Hangs the sign upside down, locks the gate and gets into the wheel-barrow.]

Hurrah for a rest! I will snooze and snooze for seven years.

[Goes to sleep.]

NORTHWIND

Sandman, Sandman!

[The Sandman appears.]

GNOMES

[Quickly picking up the sand from under the snow]

Sandman, Sandman,

Take it in your hand, man!

See the Dwarf has closed his eyes,

Come and give him a surprise.

Look, his mouth is open wide—

Pour your handful right inside,



The Sandman watches smiling

SNICKERTY NICK

Fill it up with sand, man!
Listen, listen—hear it slide,
Hear it bumping down inside,
Thank you, Mr. Sandman.

[The Sandman watches smiling while the Gnomes have a revel of mirth over the Dwarf's snoring. They conclude with a Snore Dance, circling hand in hand around the Dwarf and at regular intervals squatting as they snore with the beat of the music. Presently they run behind the trees. The snores die away with the snore music. The stage darkens.]

SCENE II

SCENE II.—*Nearly seven years have passed. Spring has taken possession of the garden and flowers are blooming everywhere. Spring, dressed in yellow, appears suddenly out of the bush; then several little figures dressed in yellow—or other colours—appear. They dance in front of the flower beds and scatter flowers.*

SPRING

[Dances and sings]

I am little mischief Spring
Getting into everything!
Toorily, oorily, oo.
And when I lift my finger ring
Made of drops of dew,
All the little robins sing,
And the babies go, Goo, Goo.

SNICKERTY NICK

Cowslip, wake the Dwarf. He has slept nearly seven years.

[Cowslip runs to wake the Dwarf, slips and falls.]

SPRING

Sweet William, pick her up. She is always slipping! Always slipping!

[Cowslip slips and falls many times. Sweet William always picks her up.]

SPRING

Buttercup, see if you can wake the Dwarf.

BUTTERCUP

[Picking a buttercup from her dress, tickles the Dwarf's nose. The Dwarf makes faces. Buttercup holds the buttercup under the Dwarf's chin.]

Do you like butter-butter-butter?

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

[In a sleepy voice]

Butter? Butter is no good without bread.

[He opens his eyes for a moment, then shuts them again.]

BUTTERCUP

[Shaking him]

He doesn't like butter! I can't wake him.

SPRING

Ragged Sailor, try what you can do.

[Ragged Sailor with his shirt sticking out tugs at the Dwarf.]

RAGGED SAILOR

Ahoy, Nicky! Time you pulled up anchor.
Here, shift to Port.

[Rolling him over on his side.]

DWARF

[Sitting up]

SNICKERTY NICK

Hello, Dicky Dicky Doubt, with your shirt-tail out!

[*They all laugh.*]

[*Nicky rubs his eyes and falls asleep again.*]

RAGGED SAILOR

There's no moving him. He's aground, he is.
[*Sailor fashion he dances a few steps.*]

SPRING

Sweet William, you try.

[*Sweet William takes the paints that the Dwarf has used for the sign and paints a dot of red on his forehead, his cheeks and then the end of his nose until he is a droll sight.*]

SWEET WILLIAM

See what a funny face he has. He won't know himself when he wakes up.

[*Shaking him*]

Wake up! Wake up! I can't wake him.

SNICKERTY NICK

BLUE BELL

Let me try. I will tickle him.

Tickely, tickely, on the knee,

If you laugh, you don't love me.

[She tickles him on the nose and on the knee.

He sits up suddenly for a moment, rubs his nose and makes funny faces. Finally he falls back asleep.]

It's no use, he doesn't love me and he won't wake up.

[The Dwarf snickers in his sleep.]

BUMBLE BEE

[In a low buzzing voice.]

I can wake him. I'll stick my itchy needle in, in, in.

[The Dwarf scratches first in one place, then in another, gives a kick and curls up asleep again.]

SNICKERTY NICK

DANDELION

I'll play a trick on him, I'll put his hair in curl papers.

[*To the audience*]

Do you like curly hair, boys?

[*Putting his front locks in curl papers*]

Look at Sleeping Beauty.

SPRING

I can wake him. If he has slept seven years he must be hungry. Nicky, Nicky, here's an apple. Take a bite.

[*A sweet smile hovers over the face of the Dwarf. He reaches out his hand in his sleep.*]

DWARF

Did anyone say apples? Apples? One a penny, two a penny, hot—no—[*hesitates*]. Personally I prefer them cold. Apples!

[*Falls asleep again.*]

SNICKERTY NICK

SPRING

I have an idea.

Trundle him in the wheelbarrow
And dump him on the ground
The way you dumped old Winter
When you didn't want him round.

CHORUS

Trundle him in the wheelbarrow
And dump him in the brook!
We dumped a fat man in last week—
Mercy, how he shook!
His face was like a cranky stove
When the fire all goes out,
And you ought to see the fat man now,
He isn't half so stout.
For we dumped him in the water
And he rolled and rolled and rolled,
He was harder than a snowball,
He was frozen icy cold;

SNICKERTY NICK

His double stomach broke off first
And then his double chin—
If the Dwarf can find them floating away,
Perhaps he'll bring them in,
Or else he'll hang them on himself
And not be half so thin!

SPRING

[With a dandelion in her mouth]

Trundle him in the wheelbarrow
And dump him on the ground,
The way you dumped me yesterday—
And see what I found,
A little picture of the sun
With sunbeams all around.

I'll stick it in his buttonhole!

[She puts the dandelion in his buttonhole.]

Now you are a little dandy dude.

CHORUS

And we'll dump him on the ground!

SNICKERTY NICK

ALL

[Rushing forward]

Let me do it.

[They wheel him round. The wheelbarrow up-sets and the Dwarf rolls out, jumps up and rubs his eyes. Spring and the faeries disappear.]

DWARF

Is it time to get up? I think I must have had a nap. I had a dream just now. What was it? Have I slept seven years?

[Proudly]

I must see if I am still as beautiful as I was. The Marquise of Magog loved me for my strange beauty. Beauty is a joy forever.

[He takes a mirror from his coat and looks at himself. Glances over his shoulder to see if anyone could be looking into the mirror.]

Extraordinary! This must be some mistake. Is this a face? Well, well, well! Personally I

SNICKERTY NICK

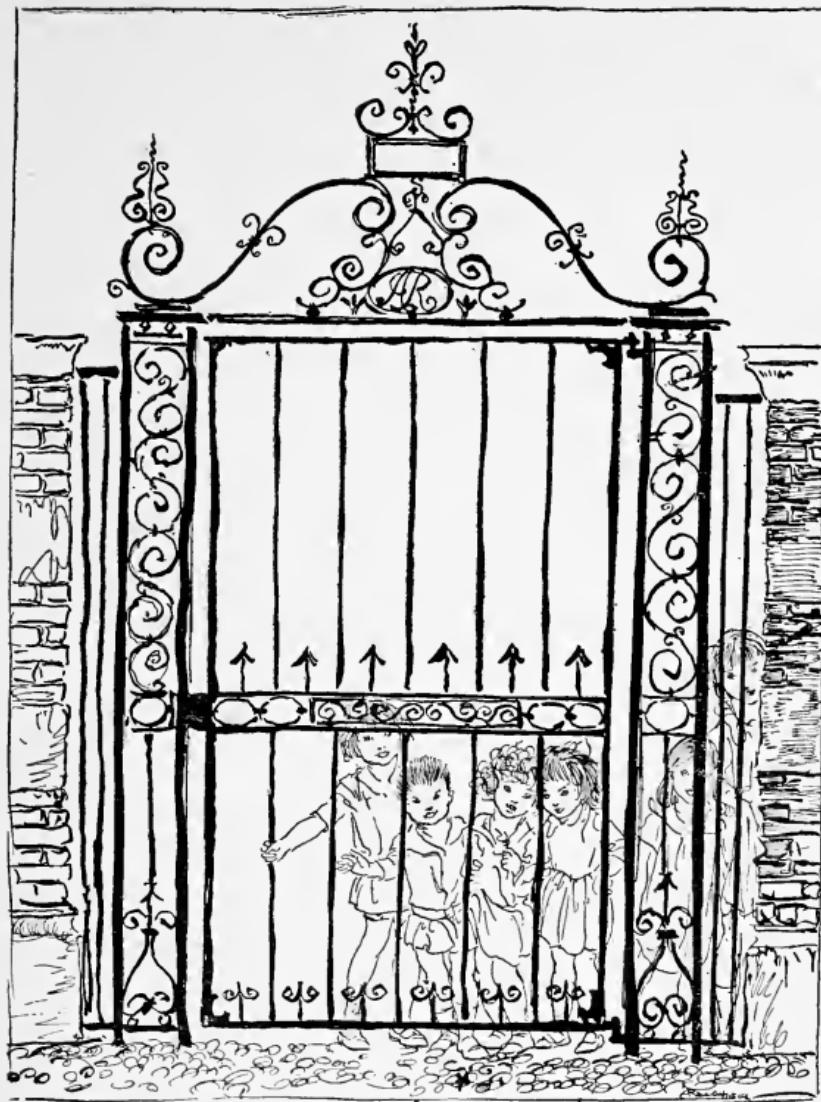
think beauty is only skin deep, fit for women and peacocks. But what is this? A dandelion? I must have been picking flowers in my sleep.

I love to sleep-walk in a dell,
To gather flowers and whistle—
But O, I woke up with a yell
The night I picked a thistle.

I dreamed I kissed a little girl
As pretty as my sister—
But O, she had long finger-nails
And scratched me when I kissed her.

Some people are like thistle-tops;
They beckon and divert you,
And look at you with friendly looks
And smile at you—and hurt you.

[*The garden being now full of flowers, little children peep through the gate and call, pelting the Dwarf with blossoms.*



Little children peep through the gate

SNICKERTY NICK

CHILDREN

Nicky, Nicky, will the Giant come back soon?
May we come in?

DWARF

[*Delighted*]

Come in, come in! But the Giant will be home soon and he will eat you up if he catches you.

[*Points to the sign.*]

FIRST CHILD

Will the Giant come to-day?

DWARF

The Giant said he would be away seven years.
[*Looking at his large dangling watch*]

It's seven years to-day. He has gone to see the Cornish Ogre. After the seven years are over he will have said all that he has to say, for his conversation is limited.

SNICKERTY NICK

SECOND CHILD

He is a selfish old Giant and he doesn't like us.
There aren't any flowers when he's here.

THIRD CHILD

[Who is timid]

He won't let anyone play in his garden. I'm
scared. I want to go home.

FIRST CHILD

We like it here and we can run when we hear
him coming.

FOURTH CHILD

It is better than playing on the hard road. The
road is full of cobble-stones.

DWARF

Quite true, quite true. Cobble-stones gather
no moss.

SECOND CHILD

It's such a nice garden.

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

Yes, geometrically it is very fine. Geometry is very interesting—to those who love it. Some people prefer the encyclopedia. Too many facts, however, stunt the imagination. Personally I prefer poetry.

THIRD CHILD

[Timidly]

If he comes back to-day, will he eat us up?

DWARF

He may not come until to-morrow. But if he does come to-day he will gobble you up.

Fee, fi, fo,fum,

He'll smell the blood of little Tom Thumb,
And yours and yours, and up he'll come
And stuff you all in his great big tum!

Fee, fi, fo, fum!

[Third child looks frightened and hides behind one of the others.]

SNICKERTY NICK

FOURTH CHILD

Aren't you afraid he will eat you up?

DWARF

No, I am very old and tough. He won't eat me.

THIRD CHILD

Let's go away.

FIRST CHILD

No, I want to stay and pick some flowers.

THIRD CHILD

You'd better not, the Giant won't like it.

FIRST CHILD

Well, let's have a dance, then.

DWARF

All right. Dancing is quite the vogue now.
I am thinking of taking it up myself.

SNICKERTY NICK

[As he takes a few steps, his whisk broom falls on floor.]

Dear me, it came off.

Button, button, who's got the button?

You got the botton? You got the button?

[To a child in the audience.]

I see a little girl and she has a little nose

Right in the middle of her face;

But the nose is gone where a good nose goes—

My button's in its place.

O, I've lost my button, alas, alack!

Little girl, little girl, please give it back!

Button, button, she's got the button

And will not give it back!

Button, button, she's got the button—

Somebody give me a tack!

[He tacks the whisk broom in place.]

Whackity, whackity, whack!

CHILDREN

Whackity—whackity—whack!

SNICKERTY NICK

FIRST CHILD

Let's play house.

SECOND CHILD

No, we played house yesterday, and Tommy played the mother. But it wasn't any fun, for Tommy hasn't any imagination. He doesn't know how to be a mother.

FOURTH CHILD

Let's play Puss in the Corner. Who'll be puss? Nicky, will you?

CHILDREN

Puss, puss, puss——

DWARF

No, I am too busy.



“Let’s play”

SNICKERTY NICK

[*The Little Boy runs in laughing. The children gather around him and draw him into the center.*]

LITTLE BOY

Isn't the Giant's garden a lovely garden to play in?

FIRST CHILD

Will you be puss?

LITTLE BOY

Yes, I'll be puss.

[*The giant is heard in the distance.*]

CHILDREN

The Giant! The Giant! The Giant is coming; he'll gobble us up.

GIANT

Who is in my garden? My own garden is my own garden. I will allow nobody to play in it but myself.

SNICKERTY NICK

CHILDREN

Nicky, Nicky, where shall we hide? If the
Giant comes in the front gate he'll catch us.

DWARF

The Giant always comes in the back gate.
Run, run.

*[The children run toward the big front gate but
they cannot open it.]*

CHILDREN

The gate won't open, Nicky. He'll catch us,
he'll catch us.

GIANT

[Heard coming nearer and nearer.]

Who is in my garden? I am the Baron Bill-
Arron Bomberrum. My own garden is my own
garden, and I will allow nobody to play in it but
myself.

SNICKERTY NICK

[The children tug frantically at the gate but they cannot open it. They hide behind the bushes. The Giant appears with a huge stick. The Dwarf steals quickly toward the gate and opens it. The children finding the gate open rush toward it. The Giant chases them with his stick. The little boy is left, whom the Giant does not see.]

GIANT

[Looking around astonished]

What has happened. Flowers in my garden? The Cornish Ogre said the flowers never bloomed in his garden and they never would in mine.

[Discovers the little boy lying under the trees, where he has been knocked down by the children in their flight.]

LITTLE BOY

[Holding up his hands]

SNICKERTY NICK

O, Mr. Giant, help me up. I have hurt myself.

[The Giant looks at the child and puts the stick down, then lifts him up; and the little boy throws his arms around the Giant's neck and kisses him.]

LITTLE BOY

Thank you, Mr. Giant.

GIANT

[Reflectively]

No one ever kissed me before. It feels queer.

[Giant puts him down.]

LITTLE BOY

I'm all right now.

[Takes the Giant's hand and looks up into his face.]

I think I will run and play with the children now. Good-bye, Mr. Giant.

SNICKERTY NICK

GIANT

Don't you want a flower? You may have one.
I'll pick one for you. Here it is.

LITTLE BOY

Thank you, good Mr. Giant.

GIANT

[Gradually relenting]

Here is another, you may have this. *[Aside]*
No one ever called me "Good Mr. Giant" before.
[Looks at the little boy with a smile.]

LITTLE BOY

Lean down and I will put one in your button-hole and one in mine.

GIANT

Aren't you a little chap?

LITTLE BOY

Aren't you a big chap? Little chaps like me
like big chaps like you.

SNICKERTY NICK

GIANT

How would you like to have me give you all
my flowers?

LITTLE BOY

O, I don't want all your flowers. Just some
of them.

GIANT

How would you like to have me give you my
kingdom and come and live here?

DWARF

[Who has been watching closely]

Now see here, Baron Bill-Arron Bomberrum,
throwing bouquets is all very well—but king-
doms—

LITTLE BOY

I couldn't stay here without the other children.

GIANT

No, I don't want the other children. But I

SNICKERTY NICK

will let you come here and play in my garden whenever you want to. You can always come.

LITTLE BOY

No, I couldn't do that. I must go now and play with them. Thank you for the flowers.

[*Kisses the Giant.*]

GIANT

No one ever kissed me before, little chap.

DWARF

Aren't you going to kiss Nicky, too?

[*Little Boy kisses Dwarf.*]

LITTLE BOY

Good-bye, Nicky. Good-bye, Giant.

[*The little boy runs out of the gate waving his hand to the Giant.*]

DWARF

A boy named Jack, so I've heard tell,

Killed a giant dead.

SNICKERTY NICK

Mightn't he have done as well
By loving him instead?

Now here's a boy who saves the day,
With swords?—no, no, with kisses.
And really there's no other way
One half so good as this is.

For killing merely makes you blue
And very cross and snappy,
While loving makes not only you
But everybody happy.

And kissing giants is such fun,
They think you're going to bite,
But as soon as you give 'em another one,
Everything's all right.

GIANT

Snickerty Nick, how did the children come
here? Did you take down the sign?

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

Yes, I had to. You see the flowers didn't like the notice. The only people who liked it were Winter and his Gnomes. They thought I was asleep, but I heard Winter tell Northwind why Spring had forgotten this garden.

GIANT

[Stands thinking.]

Nicky, go and tell that little boy if he will come back I will give him my kingdom.

DWARF

What part do I get after all those kicks? Well, well, "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." Personally I enjoy the simple life, like the colored man. Don't you know his song?

GIANT

No, I haven't heard it.

DWARF

I'm a-buildin' my house
On a mountain so high,

SNICKERTY NICK

A good place to wait
For my love to come by.

Go 'way now, all of you,
Leave me alone
On the peacefullest mountain-top
Ever was known.

Go on a-scrimmagin'
All over town
For a stove-pipe hat
And a purple silk gown.

But leave me my cabin
High up as the moon,
Here where my true love
Will come to me soon.

GIANT

Stop your noise, Nicky. Go and find the little
boy and bring him back to me.



"What part do I get after all those kicks?"

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

Can't be done.

GIANT

Not if I give him all my kingdom?

DWARF

No, he doesn't want your kingdom.

GIANT

What makes you think that?

DWARF

I don't think, I just know some things like women. Besides, you heard what he said. He wouldn't come without the other children.

GIANT

Is that why Spring wouldn't come here, I wonder?

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

It's awfully funny and yet it's true
When the children came the flowers came too.

GIANT

Go and find him and tell him all the children
can come back and play with him.

DWARF

With me, too. Don't forget, Nicky.

GIANT

[Taking up the sign.]

Nicky, I'm going to burn this sign up.

DWARF

[Pulling it away from Giant.]

No, no. Give it to me. I can fix it so that
when they see it, they'll come back.

*[Dwarf takes the brush and paints letters around
the ETT on the sign making it read PETTED.]*

SNICKERTY NICK

How do you like that? "Trespassers will be petted."

[Views his work with his head first on one side and then on the other.]

GIANT

Here, take these keys of my kingdom and unlock every gate—so that we can all have the kingdom. But first go and find the little boy.

DWARF

Hurrah!

Children, come back and be petted
And bring all the others,
Your sisters and brothers,
No trespassers now will be etted.

[Exit Dwarf by the gate.]

[The Little Boy appears, climbing over the wall.]

SNICKERTY NICK

LITTLE BOY

Oh, I am glad you have changed that old sign.

GIANT

[Lifting the Little Boy into the garden.]

And I'm glad you have come back, little chap.

[Little children are seen peeping through the gate.]

LITTLE BOY

Show 'em the new sign. Show 'em the new sign, good Mr. Giant.

[The Giant holds the new sign up.]

LITTLE BOY

Come in! Come in! He says you may.

CHILDREN

Hurray! Hurray!

Come in and play,

For the Giant is back and he says you may!



“Dipsey, ipsey, tiddley ipsey”

SNICKERTY NICK

[*They join hands and dance round the Giant.*]

Dipsey-wipsey,
Tiddledy ipsey,
Snickerty says we may!

DWARF

[*Running in with the jingling keys and skipping round the outside of the circle and joining in the chorus which they repeat.*]

Hurray! Hurray!
Hurray! Hurray!
Dipsey-wipsey,
Tiddledy ipsey,
Snickerty says we may.

CURTAIN

[*The Dwarf puts his head out between the curtains and smiles. Then he comes through and holds up a bunch of golden keys.*]

SNICKERTY NICK

DWARF

Now ladies and gentlemen, here are the keys,
I beg you to do me this courtesy, please:—
Unlock every door, every gate with these keys,
Every gate, every door in the kingdom!
And then I shall ask one more favour of you!
Please hand the keys on just as soon as you're
through
To whoever you see in a kingdom!
To unlock every garden and make them all free
One garden for children and giants—and me—
Oh, open your hearts, make them ample and
free—
For that is the key to the kingdom!

[The Dwarf throws the golden keys to the children in the audience.]

THE END



